Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

US History; Ms. Hulme

January 27, 2010

**Primary Source Documents for life of African Americans**

*Freed by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, former slave Henry Adams testified before the U.S. Senate fifteen years later about the early days of his freedom, describing white planters' unfair labor practices and the violent, intimidating atmosphere in which ex-slaves felt compelled to work for their former masters in system called Share-cropping.*

**Not Free Yet**

The white men read a paper to all of us colored people telling us that we were free and could go where we pleased and work for who we pleased. The man I belonged to told me it was best to stay with him. He said, "The bad white men was mad with the Negroes because they were free and they would kill you all for fun." He said, stay where we are living and we could get protection from our old masters.

**1. Why would the old masters want the freed slaves to stay with them?**

**2. Why would the freed slaves want to stay with their old masters?**

I told him I thought that every man, when he was free, could have his rights and protect themselves. He said, "The colored people could never protect themselves among the white people. So you had all better stay with the white people who raised you and make **contracts** with them to work by the year for one-fifth of all you make. And next year you can get one-third, and the next you maybe work for one-half you make. We have contracts for you all to sign, to work for one-twentieth you make from now until the crop is ended, and then next year you all can make another crop and get more of it."

**1. Do you think 1/20th was a fair wage? Why or why not?**

**2. Do you think the White southerners were being fair?**

I told him I would not sign anything. I said, "I might sign to be killed. I believe the white people is trying to fool us." But he said again, "Sign this contract so I can take it to the Yankees and have it recorded." All our colored people signed it but myself and a boy named Samuel Jefferson. All who lived on the place was about sixty, young and old.

**1. Do you think the speaker was right not to sign the contract? Why or Why not?**

**2. Was share-cropping different from slavery? Why or why not?**

*The Freedmen’s Bureau*

*After the Civil War, the Freedmen’s Bureau was established in order to help former slaves who were now free move on with their lives. The Bureau was to provide things like education, medical care, and job assistance. Below is a letter asking the Freedmen’s Bureau for help from an African-American army officer.*

**North Carolina Black Soldiers to the Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner**

[*City Point? Va.  May or June 1865*]

Genl   We the soldiers of the 36 U.S.Col Regt Humbly petition to you to alter the Affairs at Roanoke Island.  We have served in the US Army faithfully and don our duty to our Country, for which we thank God (that we had the opportunity) but at the same time our family's are suffering at Roanoke Island N.C.

1  When we were enlisted in the service we were prommised that our wifes and family's should receive rations from goverment.  The rations for our wifes and family's have been (and are now cut down) to one half the regular ration.  Consequently three or four days out of every ten days, thee have nothing to eat.  at the same time our ration's are stolen from the ration house by Mr Streeter the Asst Supt at the Island (and others) and sold while our family's are suffering for some thing to eat.

**1. What were the soldiers promised when they went off to war?**

**2. What is the main problem that the soldier is speaking about here?**

2nd  Mr Steeter the Asst Supt of Negro aff's at Roanoke Island is a througher Cooper head a man who says that he is no part of a Abolitionist. takes no care of the colored people and has no Simpathy with the colored people.  A man who kicks our wives and children out of the ration house or commissary, he takes no notice of their actual suffering and sells the rations and allows it to be sold, and our family's suffer for something to eat.

1. **Describe Mr. Steeter, according to the author of the letter.**

3rd  Captn James the Suptn in Charge has been told of these facts and has taken no notice of them.  so has Coln Lahaman the Commander in Charge of Roanoke, but no notice is taken of it, because it comes from Contrabands or Freedmen   the cause of much suffering is that Captn James has not paid the Colored people for their work for near a year and at the same time cuts the ration's off to one half so the people have neither provisions or money to buy it with.  There are men on the Island that have been wounded at Dutch Gap Canal, working there, and some discharged soldiers, men that were wounded in the service of the U.S. Army, and returned home to Roanoke that Cannot get any rations and are not able to work,  some soldiers are sick in Hospitals that have never been paid a cent and their familys are suffering and their children going crying without anything to eat.

**1. What is Captn James doing in order to make sure that the African Americans do not have anything to eat?**

4th  our familys have no protection   the white soldiers break into our houses act as they please steal our chickens rob our gardens and if any one defends their-Selves against them they are taken to the gard house for it.  so our familys have no protection when Mr Streeter is here to protect them and will not do it.

1. **What are the white soldiers doing to the African Americans?**

5th.  Genl we the soldiers of the 36 U.S. Co Troops having familys at Roanoke Island humbly petition you to favour us by removeing Mr Streeter the present Asst Supt at Roanoke Island under Captn James.

Genl prehaps you think the Statements against Mr Streeter too strong, but we can prove them.

Genl order Chaplain Green to Washington to report the true state of things at Roanoke Island.  Chaplain Green is an asst Supt at Roanoke Island, with Mr Holland Streeter and he can prove the facts.  and there are plenty of white men here that can prove them also, and many more thing's not mentioned   Signed in behalf of humanity

Richard Etheredge  Wm Benson

**Why do you think that Richard Benson wrote to the Freedman’s Bureau to ask for help with these problems? What was the Freedman’s Bureau set up to do for former slaves?**